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FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Information on country office staff allocation

1. The present conference room paper is presented in response to requests from Executive Board members that information be made available at the annual session on the allocation of staff resources to country offices and on criteria that guide such allocation.

2. Since the proposals for the 1998-1999 biennial budget are still being developed at the time of preparing the present paper, the Administrator limits himself to providing information on the existing allocation of staff resources and to highlighting issues and criteria that he has been taking into account in the past, and that he believes should continue to be considered in the future.

3. The structure, level and distribution of UNDP staffing have been the subject of continuous review and adjustment in an environment where there will always be tension between demands on the one hand, and, on the other, the practical limits of available financial resources that should be conserved for UNDP programme activities in support of realizing the goal of sustainable human development. In this connection, the historical evolution of the UNDP mandate and activities and the country office network need to be taken into account. Reductions in staff have been effected in the recent past at headquarters (since 1992), and in country offices (since 1994) with most of the reductions at headquarters. While the number of Professional staff in country offices was maintained at approximately the same level, the mix of international Professionals and national Professionals changed. For support to core activities, including support to the operational activities of the United Nations system as a whole, the number of international Professional posts was reduced by 23 per cent but the number of national Professional posts was increased by 21 per cent. The total number of national General Service staff in country offices was reduced by 15 per cent. The above data incorporate the additional resources that were allocated to the Regional Bureau for Europe and

the Commonwealth of Independent States in connection with the opening and strengthening of a number of country offices.

4. In determining the allocation of staff resources to individual country offices, the Administrator's concern throughout has been that workloads and work patterns be kept under review continuously and rationalized whenever possible, that additional funds and mandates be self-supporting administratively to the maximum extent possible and that resources be distributed in a manner that reflects the workload priorities of the organization. These principal considerations have guided the implementation of past budget strategies, in particular since 1992, when reductions were first introduced. In an increasingly heterogeneous development environment, however, due consideration must always be given to specific and very different situations and circumstances that can characterize demands placed on individual country offices, and thus workload, at any point in time. This naturally affects the level of resources that may be required to carry out functions successfully.

5. With the above in mind, the main criterion for allocating staff resources to country offices remains, in the opinion of the Administrator, a combination of the amount of resources that are being programmed and managed and the policy to preserve the capacity of the UNDP country office network as a whole. The UNDP country office network is a very important asset, not only for UNDP itself, but also for the operational activities of the United Nations system as a whole, including the resident coordinator system. In this connection, it is estimated that, on an average, about 29 per cent of the workload of country offices relate to such support and thus not directly to the programme activities of UNDP itself. A minimum capacity is therefore required below which maintaining a presence and the network in its present form would no longer be possible.

6. The following table summarizes the existing relative distribution of TRAC programme resources, number of offices and staff among regions, as well as for the group of least developed countries as a whole. Staff resources are all those financed under the current 1996-1997 biennial budget, i.e. under the appropriation lines covering support to core activities, support to the operational activities of the United Nations system and programme development activities. The distinction illustrates the effect of the application of the main criterion mentioned in paragraph 5.

(Percentages)

		Africa	Asia and the Pacific	Arab States	Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States	Latin America and the Caribbean	LDCs
1	TRAC resources	47	33	8	6	6	60
2	Offices	33	18	14	17	18	36
3	Professional staff	43	22	12	9	14	52
International							
4	Professional staff	41	26	10	11	13	43
National							
5	Professional staff	41	24	10	10	14	45
Total							
6	Total staff	42	25	12	9	12	47

TRAC = Target for resource assignment from the core, including for RBEC region one-time allocation from TRAC reserve and allocation in accordance with paragraph 19 of decision 95/23.

7. The annex to the present paper provides similar, more detailed information for all regions combined and for regions individually. The distribution is indicated separately for staff in support to core activities and the operational activities of the United Nations ("Regular", group A) and for special purposes ("Special purpose" group B). The allocation of the resources in group B is managed on a more global and/or regional basis. For group A, the distribution of country offices and staff is further differentiated according to the range of total trac resources that are being programmed and managed by the country offices concerned.

8. As mentioned earlier, the Administrator believes that it is also very important to review the allocation of staff resources in the context of specific situations and circumstances that can have an impact on workload and resource requirements in addition to the main criterion referred to in paragraph 5. Some of these factors are:

(a) Number of programme countries being covered;

(b) Resources, other than TRAC, that are being programmed and managed;

(c) Extent to which (sub)regional functions have been assigned and/or (sub)regional programme activities are being managed and supported;

(d) Capacity of government counterpart institutions, including those relating to support to national execution;

(e) Extent to which opportunities exist to pursue efficiencies through common premises, common services and outsourcing to the private sector;

(f) Extent to which rationalization and streamlining have already been fully explored and implemented;

(g) Extent to which support is being provided to operational activities of the United Nations, including support to the resident coordinator system; the level of representation of other United Nations system entities;

(h) Aid coordination arrangements;

(i) National staff profile (availability, qualifications, skills and experience);

(j) Ability to attract and retain staff;

(k) Local infrastructure, including accommodation, security, business environment;

(l) Support being provided to bilateral programmes and activities;

(m) History of office structure; ability to adjust.

9. The Administrator believes that the universality of the network of country offices should not be confused with the universality of the UNDP programme. Indeed, with 132 operational country offices, UNDP currently covers 175 programme countries. Similarly, universality is also not to be confused with homogeneity in the country office network. UNDP "customers" are increasingly heterogeneous in terms of their development needs and expectations for service and support. A continuous process of differentiation is thus occurring within the network, is deliberately fostered by the Administrator and, as in the past, is again being reviewed in the context of the development of the 1998-1999 biennial budget proposals and the implementation of the change process.

10. In concluding, the Administrator wishes to emphasize that the allocation of staff resources cannot be an exact science based on mathematical formulas. Many factors play a role in the appropriate allocation and composition of staff resources. Against this background, the Administrator believes that the management and allocation of staff resources should first and foremost be flexible, so that adjustments can be made and requirements can be met within the overall parameters of approved biennial budgets.

Annex

UNDP COUNTRY OFFICES ALLOCATION OF TRAC AND STAFF RESOURCES (1996-1997 BIENNIAL BUDGET)

	GLOBAL							RBA							RBAP						
	# CTY	# IP	#NP	# P	#P AVG	#GS	#GS AVG	# CTY	# IP	#NP	# P	#P AVG	#GS	#GS AVG	# CTY	# IP	#NP	# P	#P AVG	#GS	#GS AVG
A. Regular																					
TRAC resources (3 yrs) (million US$)																					
0-3	44	67	85	152	3.5	447	10.2	6	10	16	26	4.3	79	13.2	5	7	12	19	3.8	55	11.0
3-10	39	90	114	204	5.2	598	15.3	11	28	33	61	5.5	193	17.5	6	18	19	37	6.2	105	17.5
10-20	19	50	81	131	6.9	397	20.9	11	31	48	79	7.2	247	22.5	3	9	19	28	9.3	84	28.0
20-30	17	59	75	134	7.9	493	29.0	10	33	46	79	7.9	286	28.6	3	11	12	23	7.7	85	28.3
> 30	13	49	98	147	11.3	505	38.8	6	21	43	64	10.7	225	37.5	7	28	55	83	11.9	280	40.0
Subtotal A	132	315	453	768	5.8	2440	18.5	44	123	186	309	7.0	1030	23.4	24	73	117	190	7.9	609	25.4
Per cent of global total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	33.3%	39.0%	41.1%	40.2%		42.2%		18.2%	23.2%	25.6%	24.7%		25.0%	
Average per country office		2.4	3.4	5.8		18.5			2.8	4.2	7.0		23.4			3.0	4.9	7.9		25.4	
B. Special purpose																					
Emergency		12	0	12					7		7					1		1			
PDA		27	63	90					22	25	47					3	17	20			
SRIM		0	18	18						6	6						6	6			
Subtotal B		39	81	120					29	31	60					4	23	27			
Total A+B	132	354	534	888					152	217	369					77	140	217			
Per cent of global total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%					42.6%	40.6%	41.4%					21.6%	26.2%	24.4%			
Average per country office		2.7	4.0	6.7					3.5	4.9	8.4					3.2	5.8	9.0			

	RBAS							RBEC							RBLAC						
	# CTY	# IP	#NP	# P	#P AVG	#GS	#GS AVG	# CTY	# IP	#NP	# P	#P AVG	#GS	#GS AVG	# CTY	# IP	#NP	# P	#P AVG	#GS	#GS AVG
A. Regular																					
TRAC resources (3 yrs) (million US$)																					
0-3	12	19	19	38	3.2	137.0	11.4	11	11	21	32	2.9	80.0	7.3	10	20	17	37	3.7	96.0	9.6
3-10	2	4	5	9	4.5	48.0	24.0	8	16	23	39	4.9	90.0	11.3	12	24	34	58	4.8	162.0	13.5
10-20	1	2	4	6	6.0	20.0	20.0	3	6	6	12	4.0	33.0	11.0	1	2	4	6	6.0	13.0	13.0
20-30	3	12	13	25	8.3	97.0	32.3	0	0	0	0		0.0		1	3	4	7	7.0	25.0	
> 30	0	0	0	0		0.0		0	0	0	0		0.0		0	0	0	0		0.0	
Subtotal A	18	37	41	78	4.3	302	16.8	22	33	50	83	3.8	203	9.2	24	49	59	108	4.5	296	12.3
Per cent of global total	13.6%	11.7%	9.1%	10.2%		12.4%		16.7%	10.5%	11.0%	10.8%		8.3%		18.2%	15.6%	13.0%	14.1%		12.1%	
Average per country office		2.1	2.3	4.3		16.8			1.5	2.3	3.8		9.2			2.0	2.5	4.5		12.3	
B. Special purpose																					
Emergency		2		2					0		0					2		2			
PDA		2	7	9					0	7	7					0	7	7			
SRIM			2	2						1	1						3	3			
Subtotal B		4	9	13					0	8	8					2	10	12			
Total A+B		41	50	91					33	58	91					51	69	120			
Per cent of global total		11.5%	9.4%	10.2%					9.2%	10.9%	10.2%					14.3%	12.9%	13.5%			
Average per country office		2.3	2.8	5.1					1.5	2.6	4.1					2.1	2.9	5.0			

notes
CTY Country, IP International Professionals, NP National Professionals, P Professionals (international and national) GS General Service AVG average
PDA Programme Development Activities, SRIM Subregional Information Manager
TRAC resources final earmarkings for TRAC lines 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 for 1997-1999 as per DP/1997/8 (including for RBEC region one-time allocation from TRAC reserve and allocation in accordance with paragraph 19 of decision 95/23)